

June 25, 2001

Dear Landscape Industry Representative:

Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) invites your organization to participate in the development of new efforts over the next few years that would decrease loss and degradation of soil in residential and commercial landscaping. SPU is concerned about soils degradation and loss in relation to our waste reduction, water conservation and stormwater pollution prevention goals. Organic soils hold water for plants and bind heavy metals while helping to break down pesticides and hydrocarbons from cars and other motor vehicles. This all helps to conserve water, reduce runoff and improve the quality of surface water flowing into Puget Sound and local streams and lakes, and to divert waste in the case of soils amended with locally-purchased plant-based composts. It also means fewer call-backs on landscape installations, and contributes to healthier landscapes that reflect well on landscape contractors and the nursery industry that supplies them.

A soils collaboration would be beneficial to your industry and our utility, demonstrating the environmental interests of your members and SPU. We would like you to help us identify and consider a variety of soils efforts, including education, financial incentives, regulations, and utility service costs. We want to know how your industry would be affected by different efforts we will consider. We would also like to hear your ideas about what you believe are the most effective strategies to meet the goal of soil preservation and enhancement.

In mid-July, we will have more information available at the SPU Conservation & Environment website, in a special site we are developing for landscape professionals. You will find it by going to <http://www.cityofseattle.net/util/RESCONS/> at that time. The site will include a chart that briefly describes some of the options SPU has already identified and their potential impacts, and a resource list detailing some of the efforts being made by municipalities and industry groups in our region to reduce soil impacts and/or enhance soil. We'll also use this website to put up the minutes of our future meetings, mentioned below.

Please share the word about this collaborative effort with the members of your organization by whatever means you find most appropriate. We invite you to print an article in your organizational newsletter using the short announcement we have provided with this letter, make a posting on your web site, and/or assign this topic as a task to a specific committee within your organization.

After the members of your organization have reviewed the information, please identify a representative to discuss these options and others at a meeting we will be holding in September of this year. At the meeting we will be presenting some of our ideas, asking for feedback from you and forming a working group to continue the dialogue through the winter.

Page 2

We're proposing the following schedule:

May-August 2001

- Initial contact with landscape industry groups and other stakeholders to introduce them to some of the efforts SPU is considering and invite them to participate in the process
- Establishment of a web page on SPU website describing potential options for consideration

September 2001

- Meeting of interested participants to discuss ideas and receive feedback from landscape industry groups
- Formation of a working group/communication link to continue the dialogue

October 2001-February 2002

- Consultation between SPU and the working group to draft a set of actions that are effective and can be implemented

Spring 2002

- Presentation of draft actions to landscape industry groups.

If you have questions about any aspect of this soils process please call Carl Woestwin at 206-684-4684, or e-mail him at carl.woestwin@ci.seattle.wa.us We welcome your input and look forward to working more closely with your organization on this important issue.

Sincerely,

DIANA GALE
Managing Director

Enclosure